



**AARP Testimony in Support of Proposed H.B. No. 5345,  
An Act Concerning Homemaker Companion Agencies and Consumer Protection  
General Law Committee  
Feb. 21, 2013**

Good afternoon, Chairmen Doyle and Baram, Ranking Members Witkos and Carter, and members of the General Law Committee. My name is Brian Johnson. I'm a resident of Hartford, CT and am here today on behalf of nearly 600,000 AARP members in Connecticut to support Proposed H.B. No. 5345, An Act Concerning Homemaker Companion Agencies and Consumer Protection.

AARP is a nonpartisan, nonprofit social welfare organization with a membership that helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. AARP is an advocate nationwide for the rights of people aged 50 and older.

AARP supports the goal of Proposed H.B. No. 5345 to expand consumer protections and disclosures for individuals contracting with homemaker companion agencies. As the use of home- and community-based services (HCBS) grows, states must develop adequate methods for ensuring quality and making it easier for consumers and their family members to access information on quality and cost. Specifically, the proposal requires homemaker companions to disclose results of background checks, notify consumers that services may not be covered by insurance, specify and validate services and level of care, and protect consumers from overbilling. These protections will help consumer and family caregivers evaluate their care options and make informed decisions.

Proposed H.B. 5345 is a logical extension of the work Connecticut has undertaken over the past several years to improve criminal background checks in long-term care settings. In 2010, Connecticut was awarded \$1.9 million to design a comprehensive background check program. The next year, the General Assembly enacted legislation outlining the process, analysis and implementation for Connecticut's criminal history and patient abuses searches. The bill before you today helps connect consumers to the information collected from background searches. Proposed H.B. 5345 requires homemaker company agencies to make the results of those background searches publicly available to a client before an employee visits a client's home.

Additionally, the proposal alerts consumers about potential out-of-pocket costs for services not covered by insurance and protects consumers from being overcharged when services are provided by a higher-skilled individual than is needed.

AARP believes stronger consumer protections will help individuals make informed choices, monitor quality, eliminate overbilling and provide adequate notice of their potential out-of-pocket costs. We look forward to working with members of the General Law Committee to support enhanced consumer protections proposed in H.B. 5345. Thank you.

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